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REVIEW ARTICLE

USE OF MONETARY POLICY IN GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC

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Use of Monetary Policy in Government Economic

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Monetary policy is the process by which the monetary authority of a country controls the supply of money, often targeting a rate of interest for the purpose of promoting economic growth and stability. The official goals usually include relatively stable prices and low unemployment. Monetary theory provides insight into how to craft optimal monetary policy.

Monetary policy is referred to as either being expansionary or contractionary, where an expansionary policy increases the total supply of money in the economy more rapidly than usual, and contractionary policy expands the money supply more slowly than usual or even shrinks it. Expansionary policy is traditionally used to try to combat unemployment in a recession by lowering interest rates in the hope that easy credit will entice businesses into expanding. Contractionary policy is intended to slow inflation in hopes of avoiding the resulting distortions and deterioration of asset values.

Monetary policy is the process by which the government, central bank, or monetary authority of a country controls (i) the supply of money, (ii) availability of money, and (iii) cost of money or rate of interest to attain a set of objectives oriented towards the growth and stability of the economy. Monetary theory provides insight into how to craft optimal monetary policy.

Monetary policy rests on the relationship between the rates of interest in an economy, that is the price at which money can be borrowed, and the total supply of money. Monetary policy uses a variety of tools to control one or both of these, to influence outcomes like economic growth, inflation, exchange rates with other currencies and unemployment. Where currency is under a monopoly of issuance, or where there is a regulated system of issuing currency through banks which are tied to a central bank, the monetary authority has the ability to alter the money supply and thus influence the interest rate (to achieve policy goals).

It is important for policymakers to make credible announcements. If private agents (consumers and firms) believe that policymakers are committed to lowering inflation, they will anticipate future prices to be lower than otherwise (how those expectations are formed is an entirely different matter; compare for instance rational expectations with adaptive expectations). If an employee expects prices to be high in the future, he or she will draw up a wage contract with a high wage to match these prices. Hence, the expectation of lower wages is reflected in wage-setting behavior between employees and employers (lower wages since prices are expected to be lower) and since wages are in fact lower there is no demand pull inflation because employees are receiving a smaller wage and there is no cost push inflation because employers are paying out less in wages.

To achieve this low level of inflation, policymakers must have *credible* announcements; that is, private agents must believe that these announcements will reflect actual future policy. If an announcement about low-level inflation targets is made but not believed by private agents, wage-setting will anticipate high-level inflation and so wages will be higher and inflation will rise. A high wage will increase a consumer's deman and a firm's costs (cost push inflatio), so inflation rises. Hence, if a policymaker's announcements regarding monetary policy are not credible, policy will not have the desired effect.

If policymakers believe that private agents anticipate low inflation, they have an incentive to adopt an expansionist monetary policy (where the marginal benifit of increasing economic output outweighs the margin coast of inflation); however, assuming private agents have rational expectation , they know that policymakers have this incentive. Hence, private agents know that if they anticipate low inflation, an expansionist policy will be adopted that causes a rise in inflation. Consequently, (unless policymakers can make their announcement of low inflation credible), private agents expect high inflation. This anticipation is fulfilled through adaptive expectation (wage-setting behavior);so, there is higher inflation (without the benefit of increased output). Hence, unless credible announcements can be made, expansionary monetary policy will fail.

Announcements can be made credible in various ways. One is to establish an independent central bank with low inflation targets (but no output targets). Hence, private agents know that inflation will be low because it is set by an independent body. Central banks can be given incentives to meet targets (for example, larger budgets, a wage bonus for the head of the bank) to increase their reputation and signal a strong commitment to a policy goal. Reputation is an important element in monetary policy implementation. But the idea of reputation should not be confused with commitment.

While a central bank might have a favorable reputation due to good performance in conducting monetary policy, the same central bank might not have chosen any particular form of commitment (such as targeting a certain range for inflation). Reputation plays a crucial role in determining how much markets would believe the announcement of a particular commitment to a policy goal but both concepts should not be assimilated. Also, note that under rational expectations, it is not necessary for the policymaker to have established its reputation through past policy actions; as an example, the reputation of the head of the central bank might be derived entirely from his or her ideology, professional background, public statements, etc.

In fact it has been argued that to prevent some pathology related to the time inconsistency of monetary policy implementation (in particular excessive inflation), the head of a central bank should have a larger distaste for inflation than the rest of the economy on average. Hence the reputation of a particular central bank is not necessary tied to past performance, but rather to particular institutional arrangements that the markets can use to form inflation expectations.

Despite the frequent discussion of credibility as it relates to monetary policy, the exact meaning of credibility is rarely defined. Such lack of clarity can serve to lead policy away from what is believed to be the most beneficial. For example, capability to serve the public interest is one definition of credibility often associated with central banks. The reliability with which a central bank keeps its promises is also a common definition. While everyone most likely agrees a central bank should not lie to the public, wide disagreement exists on how a central bank can best serve the public interest. Therefore, lack of definition can lead people to believe they are supporting one particular policy of credibility when they are really supporting another.

TYPES OF MONETARY POLICY

In practice, to implement any type of monetary policy the main tool used is modifying the amount of base money in circulation. The monetary authority does this by buying or selling financial assets (usually government obligations). These open market operations change either the amount of money or its liquidity (if less liquid forms of money are bought or sold). The multiplier effect of fractional reserve banking amplifies the effects of these actions.

Constant market transactions by the monetary authority modify the supply of currency and this impacts other market variables such as short term interest rates and the exchange rate.

The distinction between the various types of monetary policy lies primarily with the set of instruments and target variables that are used by the monetary authority to achieve their goals.

Monetary Policy:	Target Market Variable:	Long Term Objective:
Inflation Targeting	Interest rate on overnight debt	A given rate of change in the CPI
Price Level Targeting	Interest rate on overnight debt	A specific CPI number
Monetary Aggregates	The growth in money supply	A given rate of change in the CPI
Fixed Exchange Rate	The spot price of the currency	The spot price of the currency
Gold Standard	The spot price of gold	Low inflation as measured by the gold price
Mixed Policy	Usually interest rates	Usually unemployment + CPI change

The different types of policy are also called **monetary regimes**, in parallel to exchange rate regimes. A fixed exchange rate is also an exchange rate regime; The Gold standard results in a relatively fixed regime towards the currency of other countries on the gold standard and a floating regime towards those that are not. Targeting inflation, the price level or other monetary aggregates implies floating exchange rate unless the management of the relevant foreign currencies is tracking exactly the same variables (such as a harmonized consumer price index)

MONETARY AGGREGATES

In the 1980s, several countries used an approach based on a constant growth in the money supply. This approach was refined to include different classes of money and credit (M0, M1 etc.). In the USA this approach to monetary policy was discontinued with the selection of Alan Greenspan as Fed Chairman.

This approach is also sometimes called monetarism.

While most monetary policy focuses on a price signal of one form or another, this approach is focused on monetary quantities

FIXED EXCHANGE RATE

This policy is based on maintaining a fixed exchange rate with a foreign currency. There are varying degrees of fixed exchange rates, which can be ranked in relation to how rigid the fixed exchange rate is with the anchor nation.

GOLD STANDARD

The gold standard is a system under which the price of the national currency is measured in units of gold bars and is kept constant by the government's promise to buy or sell gold at a fixed price in terms of the base currency. The gold standard might be regarded as a special case of "fixed exchange rate" policy, or as a special type of commodity price level targeting.

The minimal gold standard would be a long-term commitment to tighten monetary policy enough to prevent the price of gold from permanently rising above parity. A full gold standard would be a commitment to sell unlimited amounts of gold at parity and maintain a reserve of gold sufficient to redeem the entire monetary base.

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